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Will a Non-Interventionist Foreign Policy Be Discussed in 2012?

Posted By Kevin Kelly
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As the 2012 election cycle heats up, we are presented with two candidates from two of America's major political parties. On the campaign trail and in several of the debates, many issues affecting the American people will be discussed, such as: jobs, regulations, taxes, and health care. Given the significant negative impact of antagonistic foreign policy on the American economy, the question must be asked: how much time will be devoted to the contemplation and discussion of a non-interventionist foreign policy throughout the course of the 2012 election?

Despite running in 2008 as the "peace candidate," Barack Obama has continued the foreign policy of George W. Bush. As President, Obama has attacked more nations than his predecessor had ever hoped to do. During his run for the Oval Office in 2008, Obama promised to pull the troops out of Iraq on his first day, and despite touting a "withdrawal" of American forces from Iraq during his first term, America still has a massive embassy and several thousand troops and contractors occupying the nation. Obama has continued Bush's war in Afghanistan and shows no signs of leaving the area. In addition to continuing the occupations of his predecessor, Obama has also launched attacks against Libya, Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia. Although Obama declared during the last election cycle that he would engage in diplomacy and meet with the heads of state of nations that the United States has deemed a "threat" to national security, he continues to rattle his saber against these nations, most notably Iran, which is currently surrounded by more than forty-five U.S. military bases. Obama said during his State of the Union address with regard to Iran: "Iran's leaders are faced with crippling sanctions, and as long

as they shirk their responsibilities, this pressure will not relent. Let there be no doubt: America is determined to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, and I will take no options off the table to achieve that goal.”

Mitt Romney, who also ran in the 2008 election cycle, declared in one Republican debate his intention to double the size of Guantanamo Bay. If Romney is successful in ousting President Obama from the Oval Office, he will offer an even more hostile foreign policy. As means of explanation, one need only look to Romney’s team of Presidential campaign foreign policy advisors. Many of the individuals who counsel the former Massachusetts Governor are responsible for helping launch the United States into war against Iraq; further, these advisors want the United States to expand the war into Iran. Robert Kagan, founder of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) and the Foreign Policy Initiative (FPI), has argued for the military overthrow of Iraq since the mid 1990’s. When President Clinton launched airstrikes against Iraq in 1998, Kagan complained on NPR that the U.S. airstrikes did not go far enough, and that there needed to be a concerted effort to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Eliot Cohen, a member of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq that vigorously pushed for an attack against Iraq in 2002, shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks called for the overthrow of the Iranian government. Former diplomat and former aide to Vice President Cheney, Eric Edelman wrote in a piece for Foreign Affairs about how the United States will either have to attack Iran or contain its nuclear weapons program, which Iran denies exists and so do all of the U.S.’s sixteen intelligence agencies. Governor Romney has chosen to surround himself, and seek foreign policy advice, from these warmongers. Clearly, his proposed course of action is a direct reflection of these chosen influences.

The 2012 race for the White House features two candidates from two of the major parties vying to become President. One candidate has launched more wars than any other President, and the other is surrounded by neoconservatives and warmongers who want even more wars launched. As our country drowns in debt, our government continues to spend trillions of dollars on conflicts that we can no longer afford. How much time will be devoted to discussing a non-interventionist foreign policy throughout the course of the 2012 election? Judging by the respective actions and ideals of the two candidates and the advisors who surround them, not much. Unless we can inject the ideas of non-interventionism and peace into the public debate and force these issues to be considered, we are doomed to four more years of aggressive and uncompromising foreign policy, regardless of which candidate becomes President.